

**Inc.**

# The Key to Preventing Burnout Lies in a System You Already Use

Want to show your team you care and help them avoid burnout? Don't just offer vacation, mandate it.

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Mandate vacation time to help your team- especially those who work from home- avoid burnout

One of the most common questions I get about our 100 percent remote workforce structure is "How do you know if anyone's actually working?" It always makes me chuckle, because I've never had a problem with making sure our team is working enough -- it's making sure that they stop working. [Workaholism](#), and the resulting [burnout](#), can wreak havoc on teams -- particularly "work from home" ones.

At Greenback, we've been battling this issue for the over nine years we've been in business. The story goes like this: we hire a talented, bright, thoughtful team member and they work hard. Things are going well for a year or two until a pattern emerges where, in spite of a generous [vacation policy](#), they rarely take time off. In a world where your computer is your office, it's easy to take your office with you. So, they do.

Remote work culture only encourages those habits. It's far too easy to work a few hours on the weekend or when you're out of town for a wedding. I worked on Christmas morning once, waiting for my family to wake up for Santa. Clearly not what I would've done in a typical office job.

The same elements that make someone a terrific remote team member – proactivity, ability to self direct, a passion for business, an entrepreneurial spirit -- also make them particularly prone to burnout, a story most entrepreneurs know all too well.

✕ Easy for your remote team on is two-fold:



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Businesses, of course. But

for remote teams, it's non-negotiable if you want your team to feel they can step away for a week. Remote teams don't have the luxury of being able to lean across their cubicle to sort things out at the last minute like brick and mortar businesses do. With SOPs in place for our remote business, we feel confident that the team can keep running smoothly even in the absence of a key employee.

## You need to make vacations mandatory.

To ensure people feel comfortable taking time off, we contractually require all of our employees take at least five consecutive business days off of work. That's not to say they only have one week of holiday time (our team has three weeks to start, plus 14 company holidays -- including a whole team shut down for a week between Christmas and New Years, five sick days, etc).

The point is that every single employee is required to take one full week off at a time. Why one week? While everyone is different, of course, research shows that eight days (which is essentially one week off work, and surrounding weekend time) is the [ideal vacation length](#).

This one, two punch of having SOPs and requiring vacations has multiple benefits for our team:

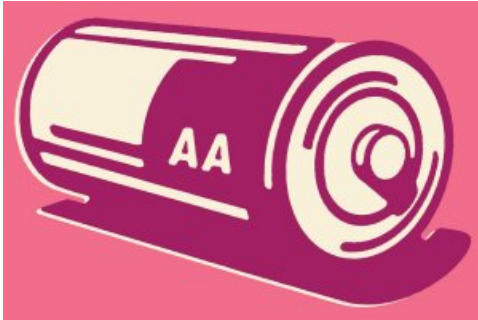
1. There is no guilt about taking vacation, it's required.
2. Employees don't stress about the workload when they return because they know someone is covering for them and doing things the correct way.
3. Holidays are interruption free and their teammates have the playbook.
4. We reduce the risk of burnout and therefore can retain excellent people for longer.
5. We know the SOPs are good for an emergency because we "stress test" them during vacations.

If you want to take care of your team, make sure that you build habits and systems like SOPs and mandatory minimum vacation time so that people feel comfortable and confident about taking time off.

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